

Amendments to the Claims:

Please replace the claims with the following listing of claims.

1-20 (Canceled)

21. (Currently Amended) A postage stamp generation apparatus, comprising:

a processor configured to execute executable data structures; and

a memory device connected to the processor for storing the executable data structures and associated operational data structures, the executable and operational data structures comprising:

a creation module configured to create a customized stamp, the customized stamp comprising at least one of text and images;

a print module configured to print a selected stamp, the selected stamp comprising one of the customized stamp and a pre-approved stamp; and

a communication module configured to receive authorization from a remote server to authorize the print module to print the selected stamp, wherein the authorization depends on validation of the customized stamp through an automatic comparison of the customized stamp and a database.

22. (Previously Presented) The postage stamp generation apparatus of claim 21, the executable and operational data structures further comprising:

a selection module configured to present a plurality of pre-approved stamps for selection by a user.

23. (Previously Presented) The postage stamp generation apparatus of claim 22, wherein the plurality of pre-approved stamps is stored on the memory device.

24. (Previously Presented) The postage stamp generation apparatus of claim 22, wherein the plurality of pre-approved stamps is stored on the remote server.

25. (Previously Presented) The postage stamp generation apparatus of claim 21, the executable and operational data structures further comprising:

- a preview module to enable the user to preview the selected stamp; and
- a purchase module to accept payment information from the user and enable the user to purchase the selected stamp.

26. (Previously Presented) The postage stamp generation apparatus of claim 21, further comprising a printer device operatively connected to the processor to print the selected stamp.

27. (Currently Amended) A postage stamp generation system, comprising:

- a postage stamp generation apparatus, comprising:
 - a processor configured to execute executable data structures; and
 - a memory device connected to the processor for storing the executable data structures and associated operational data structures, the executable and operational data structures comprising:
 - a creation module configured to create a customized stamp, the customized stamp comprising at least one of text and images;
 - a print module configured to print a selected stamp, the selected stamp comprising one of the customized stamp and a pre-approved stamp; and
 - a communication module configured to receive authorization from a server to authorize the print module to print the selected stamp;
 - a database storing stamp data relating to at least one of authorized stamps and unauthorized stamps; and
 - a ~~the~~ server configured to receive stamp generation requests from the postage stamp generation apparatus and ~~verify to validate~~ the availability of ~~customized stamps~~ the customized stamp by comparing the customized ~~stamps~~ stamp with the stamp data in the database.

28. (Currently Amended) The postage stamp generation system of claim 27, the server further comprising:

a validation module configured to validate the stamp generation requests; and
a server communication module configured to communicate ~~a~~the validation to the postage stamp generation apparatus.

29. (Currently Amended) A postage stamp generation system, comprising:

a stamp generation apparatus configured to generate a selected postage stamp;
a server in communication with the stamp generation apparatus, wherein the server is configured to ~~verify~~automatically validate that a user has authorization to use the selected postage stamp; and
a data communication network enabling communication between the server and the stamp generation apparatus.

30. (Previously Presented) The postage stamp generation system of claim 29, wherein the stamp generation apparatus further comprises a creation module configured to enable the user to create a customized stamp, the customized stamp comprising at least one of text and images.

31. (Previously Presented) The postage stamp generation system of claim 29, wherein the server further comprises:

a database storing stamp data corresponding to at least one of authorized stamps and unauthorized stamps; and
a verification module in communication with the database, the verification module configured to verify the user's authority to use a selected stamp by comparing it with the stamp data.

32. (Previously Presented) The postage stamp generation system of claim 29, wherein the stamp generation apparatus further comprises a memory device storing a plurality of pre-approved stamps.

33. (Previously Presented) The postage stamp generation system of claim 32, wherein the

memory device further stores:

- a selection module configured to select a stamp from the plurality of pre-approved stamps;
- a communication module configured to receive verification from the server;
- a preview module configured to enable the user to preview the selected stamp;
- a print module configured to print the selected stamp; and
- a purchase module configured to accept payment information from the user and enable the user to purchase the selected stamp.

34. (New) The postage stamp generation system of claim 31, wherein the verification module further comprises:

- a server communication module configured to receive a stamp generation request from the stamp generation apparatus and communicate a validation of the stamp generation request to the stamp generation apparatus; and
- a validation module in operable ~~communicate~~ communication with the database to validate the stamp generation request.

35. (New) A computer readable medium storing operational and executable data structures, the data structures comprising:

- a creation module to create a customized stamp comprising at least one of text and images;
- a print module to print a selected stamp, the selected stamp being selected from at least one of the customized stamp and a pre-approved stamp; and
- a communication module configured to receive authorization from a remote server to authorize printing of the selected stamp, wherein the authorization depends on validation of the customized stamp through an automatic comparison of the customized stamp and a database.

36. (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium of claim 35, further comprising a selection module configured to enable a user to select from a plurality of pre-approved stamps.

37. (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium of claim 35, further comprising:

a preview module configured to enable the user to preview the selected stamp; and
a purchase module configured to accept payment information from the user and enable the user to purchase the selected stamp.

38. (Currently Amended) A method for generating a customized stamp, the method comprising:

creating, at a user access device, customized stamp data comprising at least one of text and images;

communicating to a server the customized stamp data;

verifying, via the server, that the customized stamp data is usable as legal postal tender;

validating, via the server, the customized stamp data through an automatic comparison of the customized stamp data and a database; and

generating, at the user access device, a customized stamp based on the customized stamp data.

39. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 38, wherein creating the customized stamp data further comprises at least one of: selecting pre-approved stamp data and selecting custom stamp data.

40. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 38, wherein verifying further comprises receiving, from the server, a validation authorizing use of the customized stamp data.